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FM AMCONSUL JERUSALEM
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1551
INFO RUEHKK/ARAB ISRAELI COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RHEHNSC/WHITE HOUSE NSC PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L JERUSALEM 000843

SIPDIS

NEA FOR FRONT OFFICE. NSC FOR ABRAMS/SINGH/PASCUAL

E.O. 12958: DECL: 05/16/2018
TAGS: [KWBG](#) [PBTS](#) [PREL](#) [PHUM](#) [IS](#)
SUBJECT: "THE BIBLE IS OUR ROADMAP": SETTLERS OVERTAKE BEIT
SAHOUR SITE

REF: JERUSALEM 02021

Classified By: Acting Principal Officer Thomas Duffy, per reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

11. (C) SUMMARY: On May 15, 150 settlers demonstrated, overtook and spray painted three structures at the West Bank site of Osh Ghraib (known to settlers as Shdema), near Beit Sahour. The municipality wants to build a hospital on the Area C former base that is also adjacent to a USAID funded park, but does not have Israeli Civil Administration approval. Beit Sahour Mayor Hani Hayek told PolOff May 16 that the IDF twice removed settlers May 15, but the settlers returned May 16 on foot and remain at the site. Settler leaders told PolOff May 16 that the site is "a new front" and the demonstration was timed to coincide with President Bush's visit. Settlers also took out quarter page news paper ads proclaiming "the bible is our Roadmap." END SUMMARY

Settlers take former military site three times in two days

12. (C) According to local press, some 150 settlers demonstrated May 15 at Osh Ghraib (known to settlers as Shdema), former site of a Jordanian and then IDF base near Beit Sahour. Osh Ghraib is along the "Lieberman Road" connecting Har Homa with the West Bank settlements of Tekoa and Nokdim. Settlers spray painted three structures, prayed, and laid a cornerstone for the foundation of a new settlement, according to press. Settler organizations led by "Women in Green" took out quarter page ads in local newspapers urging President Bush not to facilitate establishment of "a new state and international base" for "Islamic terror." Settlers arrived in the morning and spent several hours at the site before the IDF removed them. According to Mayor neighboring Beit Sahour Hani Hayek, the settlers later returned on foot and the IDF removed them again. Hayek confirmed settlers returned on foot May 16 and remained at the site at 1500.

13. (C) Osh Ghraib is the site of a USAID-funded public park. American NGO Cure International wants to build a hospital on the site, but has not received Israeli Civil Administration approval for Area C construction. Mayor Hayek commented to PolOff that if the hospital is built, Palestinians would not need access to Israeli hospital services.

"Beginning of a new front"

14. (C) Settlement movement pioneer Elyakim Haetzni of Kiryat Arba told Poloff May 16 that he addressed settlers at Osh Ghraib May 15, and the settlers used President Bush's visit to voice their opposition to any Palestinian hospital or neighborhood at the site. "This is Area C," he said,

which was "given to us," and a new Palestinian presence might prevent settlers from using the Lieberman road (reftel). Haetzni told PolOff that the demonstration was "not like Homesh" and other demonstrations, but a practical effort to stop Palestinian development of the site. "This is the beginning of a new front," he told PolOff.

DUFFY